

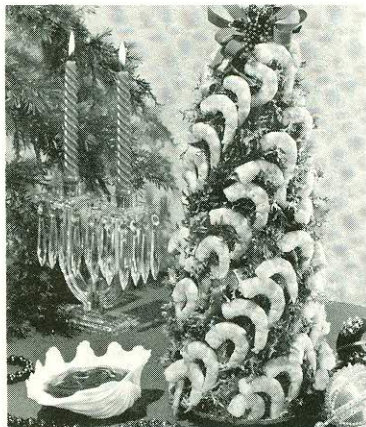
Vol. 19 Nos. 11 & 12
November-December,
1967

Conservation

Pledge

I give my
pledge as an American
to save and faithfully to
defend from waste the
natural resources of
my country—its soil
and minerals, its
forests, waters
and wildlife

*Published Bi-Monthly
in the interest of conser-
vation of Louisiana's nat-
ural resources by the
Wild Life and Fisheries
Commission, Peabody
Hall, Capitol Station,
Baton Rouge, Louisiana
70804.*



SHRIMP CHRISTMAS TREE

- 3 pounds shrimp, fresh or frozen
- 2 quarts water
- ½ cup salt
- 4 large bunches curly endive
- 1 styrofoam cone, 2½ feet high
- 1 styrofoam square, 12 x 12 x 1 inch
- 1 small box round toothpicks
- Cocktail sauce

Thaw frozen shrimp. Place shrimp in boiling salted water. Cover and simmer about 5 minutes or until shrimp are pink and tender. Drain. Peel shrimp, leaving the last section of the shell on. Remove sand veins and wash. Chill. Separate and wash endive. Chill. Place cone in the center of the styrofoam square and draw a circle around the base of the cone. Cut out the circle and insert cone. Cover base and cone with overlapping leaves of endive. Fasten endive to styrofoam with toothpick halves. Start at the outside edge of the base and work up. Cover fully with greens to resemble Christmas tree. Attach shrimp to tree with toothpicks. Provide cocktail sauce for dunking. Serves 12. (Photos by Albert Tullier.)

LOUISIANA Conservationist

LOUISIANA WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

Subscription Free to Louisiana Residents

Upon Written Request

JOHN J. McKEITHEN

Governor

DR. LESLIE L. GLASGOW

Director

L. S. ST. AMANT

Asst. Director



R. K. YANCEY

Asst. Director

LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST

STEVE HARMON Editor
McFADDEN DUFFY Staff Writer
EDNARD WALDO Staff Writer
ROBERT DENNIE Photographer

LOUISIANA WILD LIFE AND FISHERIES COMMISSION

JIMMIE THOMPSON, Chairman Alexandria
H. B. FAIRCHILD, Vice Chairman Sunshine
A. J. BUQUET Houma
JERRY G. JONES Cameron
JOHN E. KYLE, JR., Berwick
HOBSON NORRIS West Monroe
H. CLAY WRIGHT Evergreen

DIVISION CHIEFS

STEVE HARMON
Education & Publicity
TED O'NEIL
Fur Division
ROBERT LAFLEUR
Water Pollution Control
TED FORD
Oyster, Water Bottoms and Seafood
LARRY COOK
Chief Accountant

JOE L. HERRING
Fish and Game
ALLAN ENSMINGER
Refuge Division
CHARLES R. SHAW
Pittman-Robertson Coordinator
HARRY SCHAFFER
Dingell-Johnson Coordinator
SAM MURRAY
Executive Assistant

LEONARD NEW
Enforcement



Permission to reprint material in this publication will be granted provided that it is not used for advertising or commercial purposes and provided that proper credit is given. Contributions and photographs are welcome, but LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST cannot be responsible for loss or damage to unsolicited material. Manuscripts should be addressed to Editor, LOUISIANA CONSERVATIONIST, Wild Life and Fisheries, Peabody Hall, Capitol Station, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804.

Second-Class Postage Paid at Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Serving the Coastal Area

Since 1911

STATE WILDLIFE REFUGE

Robert H. Chabreck

WILDLIFE REFUGES are an important part of a waterfowl management program. Over the years it has been demonstrated that unless adequate rest areas are available, wintering waterfowl are reluctant to remain where heavy gunning pressure is applied. Although refuges for upland game species have long been looked upon as of little value in a sound wildlife program, refuges for migratory waterfowl and endangered species certainly have a place.

The wildlife refuge movement began in the United States in 1870 when the State of California established the first protected area by legislative action. Others were slow to follow and it was not until the beginning of the Twentieth Century that the second state, Indiana, set aside an area as a wildlife refuge.

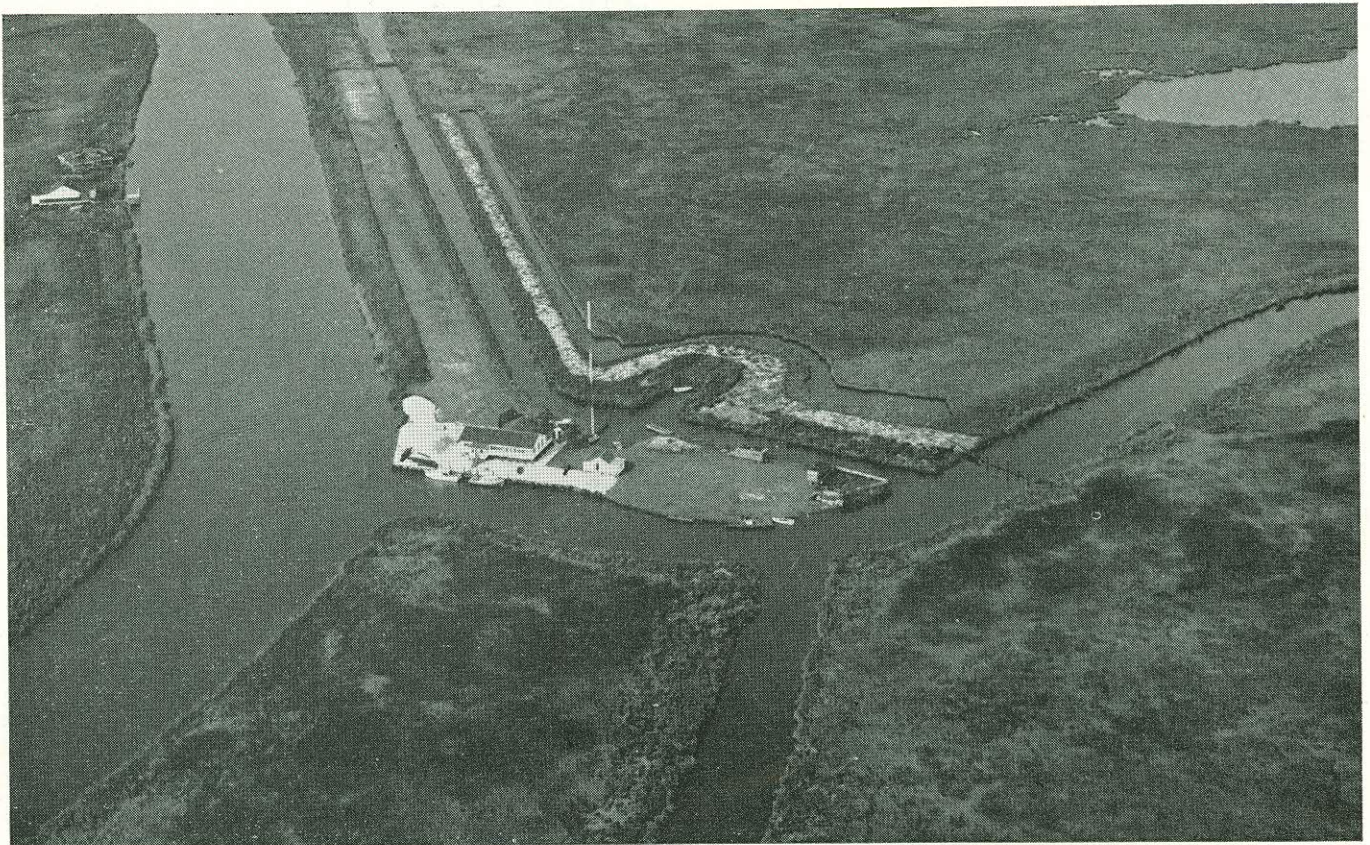
Louisiana showed an early interest and was the seventh state to establish wildlife refuges, setting up its first in 1911. The area included 15,000 acres on the southwestern shore of Vermilion Bay and was given to the state by Mr. Charles

W. Ward and Mr. Edward A. McIlhenny. The gift was accepted by the Board of Commissioners for the Protection of Birds, Game and Fish (a forerunner of the Department of Conservation and the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission). The refuge known as Louisiana State Wildlife Sanctuary was described by Mr. McIlhenny as the first in the world established by private donations to a public agency.

The area today is known as State Wildlife Refuge and is part of a statewide refuge system administered by the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission. With headquarters on Lake Fearman the area has been operated for the protection of wildlife since its establishments.

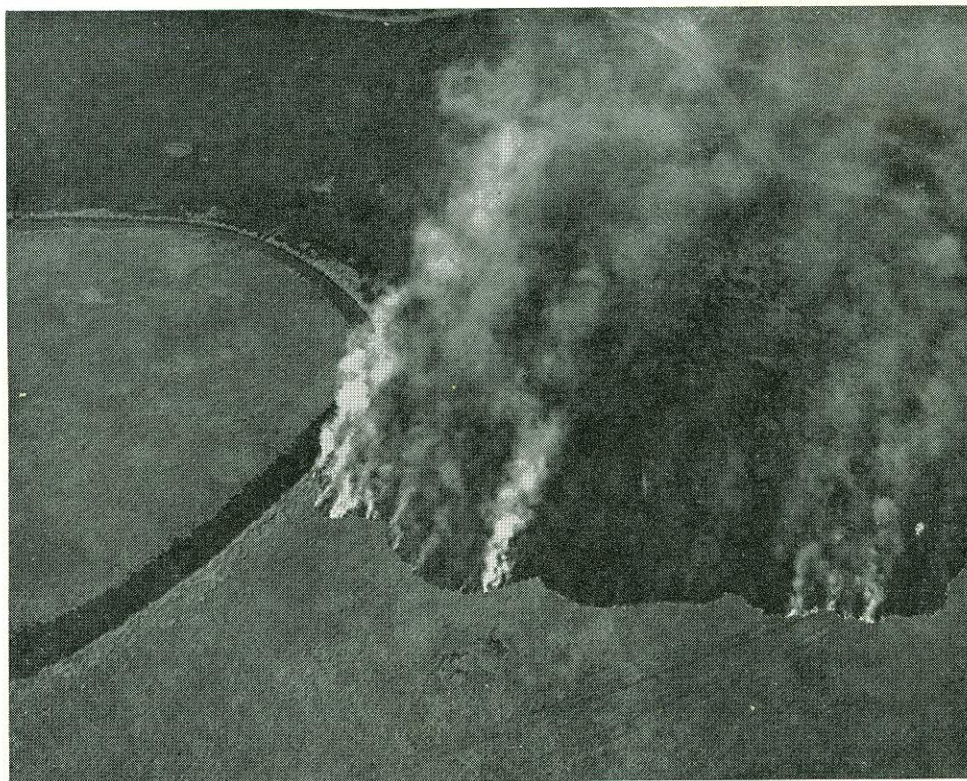
In the early days the primary management was protecting the refuge from trespassers and maintaining the boundary on the area. Also, marsh maintenance was done by controlled burning of vegetation and trapping over-abundant fur-bearing animals.

Developing the area was not considered until



The headquarters of State Wildlife Refuge is located on Bayou Fearman on the west shore of Vermilion Bay.

Annual burns are made to attract blue and snow geese to the refuge and to encourage growth of valuable marsh plants.



recent years. The reason for not developing the refuge at the onset was that most of the coastal areas were in their native state and very productive as such. Not until the encroachment of agriculture and industry into the coastal area did the need for improvement appear. Also, marsh development is very costly and funds for this work were not available in the early days.

When a development program was begun, it was aimed at controlling water levels and salinities in an effort to favor the growth of certain plants. The entire refuge is composed of brackish water marshes with normal daily tides fluctuating about one foot. The average elevation of the marsh is only one foot above sea level and high tides frequently flood the marshes. The refuge borders Vermilion Bay and the Gulf of Mexico is only five miles to the south; consequently, tide water at times is quite saline.

Preferred wildlife food plants are three-cornered grass and marsh coco grass with wideongrass, a submerged aquatic, growing in the ponds. Producing water levels and salinities favorable to these plants was accomplished by constructing earthen plugs and weirs in the marsh drainage system.

In certain area bayous were plugged with earthen material to prevent highly saline water from entering the marshes and to prevent drainage of the marshes on low tide. This system proved attractive to ducks and alligators.

A more effective method, though more costly, has been used more recently. This consisted of constructing weirs of steel sheet piling in the drainage system. The weir acts somewhat as a dam, but is set at a low elevation and water is permitted to flow back and forth over the structure. A basin of water behind the weir keeps

highly saline water from reaching the marshes, and drainage is provided following heavy rainfall or exceptionally high tides to prevent excessive flooding of the marshes. Studies along the Louisiana coast have revealed that marshes managed by this system are greatly improved for practically all forms of wildlife.

State Wildlife Refuge serves a unique purpose to wildlife in Louisiana as a blue and snow goose wintering area. The marshes north of the refuge are heavily gunned and the refuge serves as a place of retreat for upward to 50,000 geese. Whenever shooting pressure becomes too strong, the geese use the refuge as a resting area with many moving off the refuge only at certain times. The geese are attracted to fresh burns and the new sprout growth following marsh fires and the roots of plants provide an abundance of food.

While most private landowners try to attract geese during the hunting season, they prefer not to have them around after it closes. When feeding, Blue and Snow Geese graze the new growth of grass and then dig into the soil for the roots. They are very efficient at this and after a large flock had fed in one area for several days, lakes begin to appear, where shortly before may have been grassy prairie. Consequently, considerable damage often results, particularly in three-cornered grass marshes managed for muskrat or cattle grazing.

At such times refuges become an essential part of a waterfowl program and by burning on the refuge to attract geese and by hazing them off the problem area, the birds can be held on the refuge until Spring migration. State Wildlife Refuge is such an area and is valuable as a post-season wintering range.

State Wildlife Refuge is also important as a



Water control structures have been installed to regulate water conditions for the production of aquatic and marsh plants for waterfowl. This practice has also improved the marsh ponds and bayous as nursery grounds for shrimp.

resting area for ducks. The birds feed in harvested rice fields at night, then move to the refuge during the day. A normal wintering population is about 10,000 ducks, consisting mainly of gadwall, baldpate, pintail, lesser scaup and teal.

Of primary importance is the value of State Wildlife Refuge as well as other refuge areas for protecting the remaining alligators in Louisiana. The only concentrations of alligators remaining in the state are on the areas providing full protection. State Wildlife Refuge is flanked by the Rainey Wildlife Refuge of the National Audubon Society and Marsh Island Wildlife Refuge of the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission and form a large unit in which the vanishing reptiles are given protection. Because of the high value of alligator skins, the animal was reduced to a point where it was practically non-existent outside of protected areas.

In addition to waterfowl and alligators, the refuge serves as a haven for shore birds and other marsh birds, plus various forms of marine life. The many small ponds, bays and bayous on the area play an important part as a nursery ground for white and brown shrimp. Marsh mammals such as raccoon, muskrat, nutria, mink and white-tailed deer abound on the area.

State Wildlife Refuge is one of the few remaining wilderness marsh areas in the United States that has not been disturbed from its' native state by canal dredging. It remains today as it was when this country was settled. *

Commission sets up Gun Safety Program

THERE IS HARDLY a hunting season that passes without some tragic but preventable firearms accident. Some of these occur in the field, however national statistics reveal that most occur in the home. The latter occur when gun

owners are cleaning rifles and pistols; showing off their prized firearms; or sometimes leaving loaded guns where they can be reached by children who have not been trained to respect firearms.

While all firearms accidents are shocking, perhaps the most regrettable are those involving young people. There are a number of cardinal rules concerning safe gun handling, both in the home as well as in the field. Two of the most important of these are to treat every firearm as if it was loaded, and never point any firearm at any person or thing you do not intend to shoot.

There's an old saying that has been harped upon during the past few years as Congress debates additional firearms legislation. It boils down to a simple statement: "Firearms do not kill people. People do." Carelessness and ignorance of a perfectly harmless firearm transforms it into a lethal and deadly weapon.

On the other hand, a gun, if properly used by a careful and experienced person, can last a lifetime and be a wonderful and trusted companion in the woods, field, duck blind, or on skeet and target ranges.

The Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, realizing that too many preventable accidents occur each year, has initiated a mass gun safety education program that, in the near future, will provide National Rifle Association qualified gun safety instructions in every Louisiana Parish.

This past September, the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission sent 30 men through an extensive gun safety course conducted by a team of N.R.A. instructors from Washington, D.C. From this nucleus of trained men, the Commission will further train its entire available male personnel as qualified instructors.

Then the real job will begin, that of teaching youngsters as well as seasoned hunters the proper methods used in gun handling to insure safety and eliminate accidents. The proposed training program is designed to conduct courses in schools, summer camps, sportsmen's clubs, gun clubs, and any other interested groups.

The purpose of the N.R.A. gun safety courses envisioned in the statewide program is simple. If any person can hear a remark, or see one thing about gun handling that will prevent an accident that could cause the loss of an eye, a finger, a limb or a life; the time and effort involved will be well worthwhile.

Thirty nine states have statewide N. R. A. Hunter Safety Programs at this time. Some of the states have mandatory legislation which requires firearms training before the issuance of hunting licenses. Louisiana, however, will operate its statewide program on a voluntary basis, with no mandatory legislation.

Interested persons or groups wishing a gun safety program should contact the Louisiana Wild Life and Fisheries Commission, Education and Publicity Division, or Enforcement Division, 400 Royal Street, New Orleans, La. 70130. *